

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants would like to express appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided, for the acknowledgment of Applicants' Information Disclosure Statements (IDS) by return of the Form PTO-1449, and for the acknowledgment of Applicants' Claim for Priority and Receipt of the certified copy of the priority documents in the Official Action.

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 1-3, 5-7, 10 and 12 will have been amended, non-elected claims 15-24 will have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 4, 8 and 13 will remain withdrawn from consideration, with claims 1-14 and 25 pending in the present application.

Applicants acknowledge the finality of the Examiner's restriction requirement, and (as described *supra*) has canceled non-elected claims 15-24 without prejudice or disclaimer solely in order to expedite the patent application process. Applicants further expressly reserve the right to file one or more divisional applications directed to the non-elected subject matter. With respect to non-elected claims 4, 8 and 13, Applicants request rejoinder of these claims, since they are respectively dependent from independent claims 1, 5 and 10, which are allowable for reasons further discussed hereinbelow.

The Examiner has objected to the drawings, requesting that the spring mount that radially inwardly projects must be shown or the features canceled from the claims. In this regard, Applicants have canceled this limitation from claims 2 and 6, and thus respectfully request withdrawal of this objection.

The Examiner has objected to claims 3, 7, 12 and 25 because of informalities,

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requiring that "threads are" be changed to ---thread is--- in claims 3, 7 and 12, and requiring that "projection" be changed to ---spring support--- in claim 25. In compliance with the Examiner's requirement and without agreeing with the propriety of the Examiner's objection, Applicants have amended these claims to address these informalities solely to expedite the prosecution of the present application. It is thus respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw this objection.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3, 5-7 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,110,427 to SERGENT, finding that this reference teaches all limitations of these claims.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection, and note that the applied SERGENT reference fails to teach or suggest at least the claimed spring as claimed in independent claims 1 and 5, and as such further does not teach or suggest the claimed spring support, as well as the coupling ring configured to connect to the spring support, to secure the spring between the spring support and the coupling ring, as substantially claimed in these claims. To the contrary, Applicants note that SERGENT is directed to a controllable pitch propeller wrench, and completely fails to disclose or suggest any spring at all.

The Examiner has rejected claims 10, 11 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,173,958 to FOLSOM, finding that this reference teaches all limitations of these claims.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection, and note that the applied FOLSOM reference fails to teach or suggest at least the claimed spring as claimed in

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independent claim 10, and as such, further does not teach or suggest the claimed spring support, as well as the coupling ring configured to connect to the spring support, to secure the spring between the spring support and the coupling ring, as substantially claimed in this claim. To the contrary, Applicants note that FOLSOM is directed to a beam distributor for laser-to-optical fiber application, and completely fails to disclose or suggest any spring at all.

The Examiner has rejected claims 10 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,570,062 to DUKERT et al., finding that this reference teaches all limitations of these claims.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection, and note that the applied DUKERT reference fails to teach or suggest at least the claimed spring as claimed in independent claim 10, and as such, further does not teach or suggest the claimed spring support, as well as the coupling ring configured to connect to the spring support, to secure the spring between the spring support and the coupling ring, as substantially claimed in this claim. To the contrary, Applicants note that DUKERT is directed to a midstream radial valve for in-line extrusion of viscous plastics, and completely fails to disclose or suggest any spring at all.

The Examiner has rejected independent claim 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,020,522 to SEGUIN, finding that this reference teaches all limitations of this claim.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection, and note that the applied SEGUIN reference fails to teach or suggest at least the claimed inserting a spring into a

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generally annular spring support such that a spring mount of the spring support supports the spring; and connecting a generally annular coupling ring to the spring support such that the spring is secured and sandwiched between the coupling ring and the projection, as substantially claimed in this claim. To the contrary, Applicants note that the "spring" 9 of SEGUIN, as identified by the Examiner, is not a spring at all, but rather is a gasket. Further, the spring 11 of SEGUIN is not sandwiched between the washer 2 ("coupling ring" as identified by the Examiner) and the cap 3' ("projection" as identified by the Examiner).

Absent a disclosure in a single reference of each and every element recited in a claim, a *prima facie* case of anticipation cannot be made under 35 U.S.C. § 102. Since the applied references fail to disclose each and every element recited in independent claims 1, 5, 10 and 25 and the claims dependent therefrom, these claims are not anticipated thereby. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

With respect to the Examiner's rejection of dependent claims 2-3, 6-7, 9, 11-12 and 14, Applicants submit that these claims are dependent from one of allowable independent claims 1, 5 and 10, which are allowable for at least the reasons discussed *supra*. Thus, these dependent claims are also allowable for at least the reasons discussed *supra*. Further, all dependent claims set forth a further combination of elements neither taught nor disclosed by any of the applied references.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that each and every pending claim of the present application meets the requirements for patentability under 35 U.S.C. § 102, and respectfully requests the Examiner to indicate the allowance of each and every pending

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claim in the present application.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

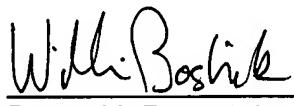
In view of the fact that none of the art of record, whether considered alone, or in any proper combination thereof, discloses or suggests the present invention, and in further view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the Examiner's action and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested and are believed to be appropriate.

Applicants note that this amendment is being made to advance prosecution of the application to allowance, and no acquiescence as to the propriety of the Examiner's rejection is made by the present amendment. Applicants further note that claims 1, 5 and 10 have been amended to merely relocate the claimed spring from the preamble to the body of the respective claims, and thus these amendments have not been made for a purpose related to patentability, but rather are clarifying amendments that are cosmetic in nature by rendering explicit what was already implied in these claims, *i.e.*, that the spring is part of the claimed invention. Thus, all amendments to the claims should thus be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto. Accordingly, this amendment should not be considered a decision by Applicants to narrow the claims in any way.

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Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this Response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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